

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-24 are presently active in this case. The present Amendment amends Claims 1, 6-7, 9 and 15-16 without introducing any new matter.

The outstanding Office Action objected to the specification because of informalities and rejected Claims 1, 6-7, 9, and 15-16 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as indefinite. Claims 1-24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by Herman et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,075,905, herein "Herman").

In response to the objections to the specification, the specification is amended to correct the noted informalities. In light of their formal nature, the changes to the specification do not raise a question of new matter.

In response to the rejection of Claims 1, 6-7, 9, and 15-16 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, and to clarify the claims, Claims 1, 6-7, 9 and 15-16 are amended to recite "determining a feature point of one of the plurality of partially overlapping images corresponding to a common location of the tangible object"¹ and to correct minor formalities regarding the tangible object and tangible object plane. In view of amended Claims 1, 6-7, 9 and 15-16, it is believed that all pending claims are definite and no further rejection on that basis is anticipated. If, however, the Examiner disagrees, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned who will be happy to work with the Examiner in a joint effort to derive mutually acceptable language.

In response to the rejection of Claims 1-24 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b), in light of the amendments to independent Claim 1, Applicants traverse the rejection and request reconsideration of the rejection, as next discussed.

¹ Finds non-limiting support in Applicants' specification, for example at page 15, lines 9-14 and in corresponding Figures 2, 12.

Briefly recapitulating, Applicants' Claim 1 relates to an image processing method, which is configured to correct image distortions caused by oblique imaging in which a tangible object on an object plane is taken from different oblique directions to obtain a plurality of partially overlapping images. The image processing method includes the steps of: determining a feature point of one of the plurality of partially overlapping images corresponding *to a common location of the tangible object*, shared by the plurality of partially overlapping images, and determining a matched point of one of the other partially overlapping images corresponding to the feature point *so that a direction of the tangible object plane is calculated based on the feature point and the matched point*; selecting one of the plurality of partially overlapping images as a standard image whose image distortions are to be corrected; and generating a distortion-corrected image on a projection plane by projecting the standard image onto the projection plane based on the direction of the tangible object plane such that image distortions in the standard image are eliminated. Independent Claims 6, 7-9, and 15-16 disclose similar features in the context of an image processing method (Claim 6), an image processing apparatus (Claims 7 and 9), and a computer-readable storage medium (Claims 15 and 16).

Turning now to the applied reference Herman, the method and apparatus (mosaic image construction) of Herman is directed to the calculating of vectors between digital images that may include objects.² However, Herman fails to teach or suggest "determining a feature point of one of the plurality of partially overlapping images corresponding to a common location of the *tangible object*, shared by the plurality of partially overlapping images, and determining a matched point of one of the other partially overlapping images corresponding to the feature point so that a *direction of the tangible object plane is calculated based on the feature point and the matched point*" (emphasis added), as recited

² See Herman in the Abstract and from column 2, line 65 to column 3, lines 8.

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in amended Claim 1. Herman teaches at column 17, lines 13-24 that common features in misaligned images can be clicked on by a user to perform manual alignment of images, and also states at column 6, lines 47-51 that a human operator may manually assist with image alignment by designating common points on different images. In other words, Herman allows the correction of two misaligned images by manually adjusting the overlapping, and therefore fails to teach or suggest the claimed determining a feature point of one of the plurality of partially overlapping images corresponding to *a common location of the tangible object, shared by the plurality of partially overlapping images*.

Furthermore, the outstanding Office Action confirms at page 13, lines 1-5 that Herman “does not calculate a direction of a tangible object plane.” Herman is in fact entirely silent on such a feature. Accordingly, Herman also fails to teach or suggest that a direction of the tangible object plane is calculated based on the feature point and the matched point, as claimed by Applicants.

For at least the above reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that Herman does not disclose or suggest the above-mentioned features of Applicant’s Claim 1 and request reconsideration of the rejection of Claim 1 over Herman.

Independent Claims 6, 7-9, and 15-16 recite limitations analogous to the limitations recited in independent Claim 1. Moreover, Claims 6, 7-9, and 15-16 have been amended in a manner analogous to the amendment to Claim 1. Accordingly, for the reasons stated above for the patentability of Claim 1, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections of Claims 6, 7-9, and 15-16 are also believed to be overcome in view of the arguments regarding independent Claim 1

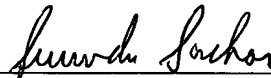
Consequently, in view of the present amendment, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application, and the present application is believed to be in

condition for formal Allowance. A Notice of Allowance for Claims 1-24 is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner deem that any further action is necessary to place this application in even better form for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the below listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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